



The Henry Williamson Society

SCHOOLS' WRITING COMPETITION 2025

Guidelines

Theme: Nature-themed writing, reporting for a school magazine, newspaper article, digital blog or holiday brochure

Titles: 'A Favourite Walk' or 'A Gull's Life'

Henry Williamson (1895–1977) was a soldier, writer, broadcaster, naturalist, farmer and, above all, visionary writer. He served in the First World War, and wrote extensively of his experiences as a young soldier. After the war he settled in North Devon, where he started his writing career. Later he farmed for several years in Norfolk before returning to his beloved Devon. His nature writings are considered some of the best in the English language, with *Tarka the Otter* being his best-known book. This book, published in 1927, came second in a 2017 poll to find the nation's best-loved nature book. Many early books paint a portrait of a long-vanished country life in the Devon village of Georgeham.

Judging criteria:

The judges do not want you to copy Henry Williamson's style of writing, only to take inspiration from it, as we would like you to develop your own unique style. This year we have asked you to be inspired by some of Williamson's newspaper and magazine articles as well as his books.

We are looking for a descriptive reportage style of writing centred on your nature observations, either in town, seaside or country. Your piece can be 'factual' or more fictional, but most importantly must display imaginative and creative use of language based upon the theme set, and chosen from either of the titles: 'A Favourite Nature Walk' or 'A Gull's Life'. This year, we are thinking particularly of writing that shows close observations of the natural world when you walk around a park, garden or have a stroll in the countryside; how animals or some species of birds behave. Tell about the signs of fauna and flora, the landscape and the environment around you that you have observed, and how it made you feel. There are some examples of Henry Williamson's writings, and some by his son Richard Williamson, who was also a nature writer, included in the competition pack as well as other suggestions. The examples provided in the sources are there to help you think about Henry Williamson's descriptive writing and get your own thoughts, nature observations and imaginative processes working. They should not be copied. Correct spelling, grammar and punctuation will be taken into consideration.

Your piece of writing, if you choose to write about gulls, should be as you have seen them and imagine their life, with close descriptions of their habits, habitat and environment – be it at the seaside, in your town or in the countryside. If you decide to write a piece on a favourite walk, make sure to include lots of descriptions of nature and your own feelings when you encounter them, even if you are having your walk in a park!

We wish you lots of descriptive powers! Let your reporters'/writers' pens run wild and tell us what 'A Favorite Walk' or 'A Gull's Life' means to you and how you want to tell others about it. Remember, if your piece wins, it will be published in a magazine for real!

Writing Task:

Write approximately 500 words in prose form using the title of either 'A Favourite Walk' or 'A Gull's Life'.

Details, rules and source materials are available at our website,
www.henrywilliamson.co.uk

or by post from:

The Henry Williamson Society,
c/o Louise McGlone
5 Framfield Place
Hammonds Green
Framfield
Uckfield
TN22 5QH

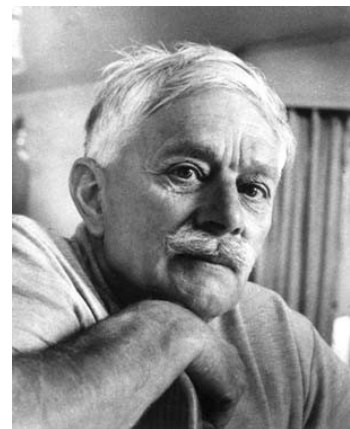
Some pictures of Henry Williamson:



Henry Williamson as a young soldier in 1915



Outside his cottage in Devon in the early 1920s



In later years